

FISCAL NOTE
SB 775 - HB 1349

March 30, 2003

SUMMARY OF BILL:

- Authorizes the Commissioner of Education to establish the *Matrix Class Size Pilot Project* effective in the 2003-2004 academic year and to report the status of such project to the Select Oversight Committee on Education. The pilot shall initially be limited to nine local education agencies (LEAs) statewide with no more than three in any one grand division. This pilot would be used to determine maximum class sizes in Tennessee and would be based on rational, objective and methodically gathered data reflective of the level of student need as it relates to teacher parity.
- Provides the following principals would be used in developing this pilot:
 1. Maximum class sizes for special education classes shall be the same as those in the BEP funding formula; however, student counts will be based on support needs;
 2. All students with disabilities shall be educated in the least restrictive environment possible; and
 3. Students with disabilities shall be included in the counts used to determine class size and caseload determinations.
- Bases the project's class size and caseload determinations on the following:
 1. Students with high needs for support services shall be weighted differently for purposes of class size determination than students with low support needs.
 2. Weighting of students should result in equitable sizes and caseloads so that no teacher has an unfair number of high need students.
 3. The instrument used to assess the level of student need in the classroom shall be equally applicable to students with and without individualized education plans (IEPs).

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:

Increase State Expenditures - Exceeds \$400,000

Estimate assumes:

- The pilot is not expected to incur major expenditures relative to recruiting pilot school, developing the instrument (may elect to use the Williamson County matrix) or training.
- East pilot school will require at a minimum one additional position if teacher workload parity were to be achieved through weighting of children based on their level of need.
- By using a statewide average classroom salary of \$45,900, including benefits, a minimum number of nine teachers (three teachers in each of Tennessee's grand divisions) would cost an estimated \$413,095.
- In the absence of any language in the bill that would contradict, it is assumed that the state would bear all expenses related to this pilot.

For information purposes, if the pilot is expanded to include the entire state in future years, state and local expenditures could increase significantly if funding is based on the weighting of students rather than on their actual number. Further, LEAs that are at their maximum capacity for physical space could also incur expenses associated with providing additional physical space due to the equalization of teacher workload.

CERTIFICATION:

This is to duly certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



